

# *Information for Expectant Mothers*



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# **INFORMATION FOR EXPECTANT MOTHERS**

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## **PREGNANCY**

Young married women often fear pregnancy and confinement. They should not do so. Pregnancy is a normal condition, so is childbirth, and motherhood should not be dreaded, if you secure medical advice as soon as you know your condition, live a normal healthy life and follow the simple directions given here.

## **WHAT THE BABY EXPECTS**

Every new baby that comes into the world has a right to expect a normal birth and a healthy mother. Remember the care of the baby begins long before the baby comes into the world. Proper care during pregnancy goes far toward insuring a well baby, a healthy mother and a normal confinement.

## **HAVE MEDICAL ADVICE EARLY**

**PUT YOURSELF UNDER THE CARE OF A PHYSICIAN JUST AS SOON AS YOU KNOW YOU ARE PREGNANT.**

**IF YOU CANNOT AFFORD TO HAVE YOUR OWN DOCTOR, GO TO A DISPENSARY, HOSPITAL, PRENATAL CLINIC, INFANT WELFARE STATION OR NURSING CENTER.**

From the time you become pregnant you are responsible for a life, so do not run the risk of anything going wrong during pregnancy, at childbirth or afterwards.

Have medical attention when the baby is born and for at least eight or ten days afterwards.

## **CONSULT THE NURSE**

If you are an Industrial policy-holder of the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, send for the Metropolitan nurse when you know you are pregnant and she will teach you what you should do at this time.

If we have nursing service in your town or city, you will find the name and address of the nurse in the METROPOLITAN MAGAZINE. You may get the nurse by posting the Company's mailing card to her, or by asking the agent when he calls at your home to send the nurse to you. It is not necessary to tell the agent why you want to see the nurse.

## **HOW TO TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF**

### **DIET.**

Eat food that will digest easily.

Do not eat food that you know usually disagrees with you.

Eat sparingly of meat, but drink a great deal of water and milk. Fluids will help you throw off waste materials which, if allowed to remain in your body, may do you harm. You should drink four or six glasses of water in twenty-four hours.

Eat lots of fresh fruit and green vegetables.

If you are accustomed to drinking tea or coffee, take only one cup a day.

Do not touch beer or wine or any beverage that contains alcohol.

### **CLOTHING.**

Your clothing should be light in weight, comfortably loose and warm in winter. Have the weight hang from the shoulders and not from the waist. It is best not to wear corsets in the early stages of pregnancy, but if you feel you must wear a corset the first few months it will not do harm if loose and perfectly comfortable.

Wear comfortable, roomy shoes with low heels all the time, as the feet swell frequently during pregnancy.

### **EXERCISE.**

Try to avoid heavy work, but remember also that moderate exercise is good for you.

Avoid stretching and straining, also machine sewing. When you make the baby's clothes, ask a friend or a neighbor to run the sewing machine for you.

Do not let yourself become over-tired. Prevent fatigue by lying down for five minutes' rest several times a day.

Be careful not to over-exercise at the time when ordinarily your monthly sickness would occur. If employed in a factory you should give up your work two or three months before confinement if possible. In any case do not work longer than one month before confinement.

## **FRESH AIR AND REST.**

Rest and fresh air are most necessary for the future good of yourself and baby. Allow plenty of fresh air in your home day and night. When you go to bed sleep with your windows open, but do not lie in a direct draft.

## **BATHING.**

It is important to keep the pores of the skin clean and open during pregnancy.

Waste matter is thrown off by the skin and by the bowels.

It is as necessary to keep the pores of the skin open as it is to keep the bowels open.

This can be done by careful bathing and rubbing. Take a bath daily if you can manage it. If you cannot do this, take a sponge daily with cold or tepid water, followed by a good rubbing with a rough towel. A warm soap and water bath should be taken two or three times a week.

Avoid a hot bath, particularly at the time your monthly sickness would ordinarily have occurred.

## **BOWELS.**

See that your bowels move at least once every day. The womb grows gradually larger during pregnancy and pressure on the intestines or bowels may cause constipation. This is a common trouble among expectant mothers.

To prevent constipation, eat plenty of fresh or cooked fruit, vegetables, coarse cereals, senna prunes and figs. Rely on diet rather than on injections or physics to prevent the trouble, but if you find it continues obstinately call the attention of the physician or the nurse to your difficulty.

## TO PREPARE SENNA PRUNES

Cook one pound of prunes in the usual way. Before putting aside to cool add eight cents worth of senna leaves. Eat from four to six prunes daily.

NEVER TAKE CASTOR OIL, CALOMEL OR SALTS WITHOUT THE PHYSICIAN'S ORDER.

### BREASTS.

You should not allow corsets or tight clothing to press on the breasts.

As we said elsewhere, the corset if worn must be loose and comfortable and the rest of the clothing should hang easily from the shoulders.

Bathe the breasts every day with weak salt and water and keep them very clean.

If nipples are inclined to sink in, gently draw them out morning and night after bathing. If you persevere in doing this it may save much pain and discomfort later on when the baby begins to nurse.

### TEETH.

Teeth are unusually liable to decay during pregnancy. You should have a dentist look over your teeth very early in pregnancy.

Cleanse your teeth with a toothbrush every morning and at night before going to bed.

If you have nausea—"morning sickness"—rinse your mouth out after each attack of vomiting. There is no better mouth wash than one-half teaspoonful of baking soda dissolved in a glass of hot or cold water.

### HEADACHES.

An occasional headache may come from constipation, but if you suffer often from severe headaches you must consult your doctor, as it is possible that this may be a symptom of some other trouble requiring medical advice.

## SYMPTOMS WHICH CALL FOR MEDICAL ATTENTION

If you notice one or more of the following symptoms, call the matter to the attention of physician or nurse as soon as possible.

## **BLEEDING.**

At the first sign of bleeding go to bed immediately and have someone send for your doctor or the nurse. Raise the foot of the bed but do not try to do this yourself as the exertion would be harmful.

## **MORNING SICKNESS.**

Expectant mothers usually experience morning sickness early in pregnancy. Vomiting during pregnancy, unless unusually severe, need not alarm you. If the condition should become persistently severe and be accompanied by abdominal pain, lose no time in consulting a physician.

## **DIMINISHED URINE.**

Watch carefully for any lessening in the usual amount of urine passed. The normal quantity is from three to four pints in twenty-four hours.

You should have a specimen of your urine examined by the physician as soon as you know you are pregnant. Continue to have this done once a month until confinement.

Pay strict attention to the above precaution, and so avoid serious kidney complications which sometimes occur during pregnancy or at time of childbirth.

## **SWELLING.**

If you notice signs of puffiness under the eyes or persistent swelling of the legs or other parts of the body, you must call the matter to the attention of a physician or of the nurse. Do not neglect this matter—it is important.

## **PREPARATION**

### **CALCULATING THE TIME OF CONFINEMENT.**

You may know the probable time you will be confined by counting forward nine months from the date of the first day of your last monthly sickness and adding seven days to that. For example, if the first day of the last monthly period was on April 10th, your confinement would probably fall on or about January 17th.

## **PLACE OF CONFINEMENT.**

Make your plans early as to where you will be confined and what doctor you will have attend you.

Decide whether you wish to go to a hospital or prefer to be confined in your own home.

The Visiting Nurse can be of the greatest assistance in helping you to make your arrangements.

## **PREPARATION FOR CONFINEMENT**

### **ARTICLES NEEDED.**

You should have the following articles ready for confinement:

Sufficient bedding.

Six nightgowns.

Piece of white oilcloth,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  yards square.

Plenty of old newspapers.

Plenty of old muslin.

Two pounds of absorbent cotton.

Two pounds of sterile gauze or equivalent in old muslin which has been sterilized.

Useful bed pads can be made by enclosing several newspapers in old muslin. If these are to be used, at least twelve of them should be prepared.

Cord dressings of old muslin.

Sterilized tape for tying cord.

Castile soap.

Blanket (old and soft) to wrap baby in.

Clothes-basket for baby's bed.

Two abdominal binders (roller towels may be used).

Sufficient quantity of perineal pads, which may be made either of absorbent and sterilized gauze or of old sterilized muslin.

Two breast binders from eight to ten inches wide (unbleached cotton).

Boric acid powder (five cents worth).

Small bottle of alcohol.



Two dozen safety pins, large and small.  
Oil or lard for greasing baby.  
Scissors.

## STERILIZATION

Everything that is likely to come in direct contact with you or the baby at the time of confinement should be sterilized. Sterilization destroys germs and makes things "surgically clean." You can avoid the danger of infection during confinement by taking this precaution. Many of the troubles which occur at childbirth are caused because the articles which are used are not "surgically clean."

### HOW TO STERILIZE.

Gauze, old muslin or confinement pads must be sterilized. Articles should be wrapped up in squares of unbleached cotton. Old muslin, if strong enough, will answer the purpose as well. Wrap the bundles as you would a paper parcel, turning corners in and over at each end of the wrapper. Be sure that every part of the contents is covered, then pin or tie securely. If you use pins be sure that the points are well inside the wrapper. A scratch from a rusty pin point later on might be dangerous.

The family clothes-boiler, thoroughly cleansed and scoured, will make a very good sterilizer. Take a long towel and tie it at each end (hammock fashion), then fasten the ends of the hammock to the handles of the boiler, allowing it to hang high enough to prevent the contents being soaked when the water boils. You must have enough water in the boiler to insure its not going dry before the articles are sufficiently sterilized. When the hammock is in place and the water boiling hard, place wrapped bundles in the hammock, put on the boiler cover tightly and allow articles to remain in the steam for a half hour, the time required for proper sterilization.

The bundles when taken out of the sterilizer will be damp from the steam. Place on clean dinner plates, put in a warm oven and leave there until quite dry. Roll the bundles in a clean towel, put away in a clean place and do not disturb until the sterilized articles are called for by the physician or nurse at the time of confinement.

## ARTICLES FOR THE BABY

We give below a list which represents the smallest quantity of articles required for the baby. If financial circumstances will allow, we advise that a more generous supply be provided.

Square of flannel or knitted shawl.

Two knitted bands or strips of soft flannel (six to eight inches wide and eighteen inches long).

Two shirts of cotton and wool. A heavier weight should be used in winter than in summer.

Two pairs of stockings.

Two flannel petticoats.

Three slips.

Four nightgowns.

Twelve or more diapers (eighteen inches square). Old muslin or cheesecloth may be used for diapers while the baby is small.

Be sure that your clothing as well as the baby's is clean, complete and in separate places.

Have the necessary articles in the house not later than the sixth month of pregnancy.

## THE BABY'S BED

The baby should sleep by itself. A large clothes-basket makes a satisfactory bed. It should be furnished with a small hair mattress protected by a small piece of rubber sheeting or oilcloth, and a piece of padding over that. The bed covering should be warm but light in weight. Little blankets can be made of squares of cheesecloth lined with cotton batting and quilted. You should have at least three of these.

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For further information about the care of the baby from the time of birth up to two and one-half years of age, see the Metropolitan booklet, "The Child."

If you haven't a copy, ask your agent for one the next time he calls at your home.

